

April 2024

# The Canterbury Cross

Monthly newsletter of St. Thomas à Becket Episcopal Church  
Morgantown, WV

## HEP Summer Mission Trip in the Works

By Grace Ayscue

When Father Paul Barker talked to folks at St. Thomas à Becket Church last month, we learned that we can take a mission trip without need for passports or vaccines against tropical diseases—without crossing a national or even state border! The Highland Educational Project outside Welch, WV hosts mission groups and connects them with people and meaningful work in the heart of Appalachian coal country.

HEP has been an outreach of the Diocese of WV since the late 1940s, responding to a variety of needs in McDowell County over the decades. After becoming temporarily overwhelmed and overextended, resulting in temporary closure several years ago, HEP is again up and running. It is one of three Diocesan projects of focus for Bishop Matthew Cowden (along with Peterkin and Sandcrest). Father Paul, who led mission trips to HEP before he sought ordination, is the new director as of last year. HEP in its latest version is focusing on three things: promoting literacy, including a library and a special concentration on children in the second to fourth grades; providing a home base for mission trips; and fostering spiritual life of the community and of mission groups. Folks may come on mission trips from WV and beyond, from Episcopal churches and other denominations, whether youth groups or retirees. Groups have the opportunity to meet and work with people in

McDowell county on small construction projects, to lend a hand to locally-operated ministries, or to help with the library and reading camp.



Fr. Paul Barker presents information on HEP.  
Photo by Linda Durfee.

Father Paul addressed the question: *why the focus on McDowell County?* with an array of sad facts. Once a booming second home to wealthy coal barons, McDowell County has declined from nearly 100,000 people in 1950 to fewer than 20,000 in 2020. Unemployment and resulting poverty, limited educational opportunities, and most recently the opioid crisis have plagued the remaining population. In 2015 McDowell County's rate of drug-induced deaths led the US at almost ten times the national average (141 per 100,000 vs. 14.7 per 100,000). McDowell County is one of the five poorest counties in the United States. The life expectancy there for men is a dozen years shorter and for women a decade shorter than

the national average. The median household income is \$26,000, less than half the national median, and nearly a third of people live below the poverty line (32%, vs. 11% nationwide). The USDA has classified McDowell County as a food desert; since the closing of the Super Walmart, only two grocery stores serve the 535-square-mile county.

After massive floods hit McDowell County in back-to-back years in the early 2000s, FEMA built a facility outside the county seat, Welch, to house residents while homes were being rebuilt. Later, recognizing the enduring presence of the Highland Educational Project in the area, FEMA donated the building and land to the Diocese of WV, and HEP moved its base to the new location. The building has several multi-bed rooms, bathrooms with showers, laundry facilities, and a commercial kitchen. It makes a perfect home base for groups to come and live for several days to a week, going out into the community for service projects and returning for meals, fellowship, and sleep. A large common room serves a multitude of purposes including recreation room for mission groups and library and event center for locals. At the Bishop's suggestion, one room has been converted to a chapel that mission groups and the community may use for services.

Possible work for HEP mission groups ranges from small construction projects, such as steps or porches for mobile homes, to work with existing ministries, such as a soup kitchen, food pantry or thrift shop, to running a summer reading camp. Often participants will work side by side with locals, forming relationships that can be fostered over repeated visits. Father Paul notes that there are many advantages to groups that choose to take their mission trips to HEP - they can do work that is truly helpful and meaningful without needing to travel overseas. It does take some planning to make sure each group has the resources it needs.

A group from St. Thomas à Becket will be taking our first mission trip to HEP in nearly two decades. The dates are being determined and will likely be either in early August or possibly the week of July 4 (other summer weeks are already taken). Father Michael is hoping to join us, and Father Paul will help to match us with specific projects. Anyone interested in participating this summer, or curious about possible participation in future years, or with any questions at all: please contact Grace Ayscue at 304-276-8037 or [grace.ayscue@gmail.com](mailto:grace.ayscue@gmail.com).

Besides participation in a mission trip Father Paul

listed many ways to support HEP: by contributing to the work of mission trips, by supporting fundraisers, and by prayer. Contributions to improve and maintain the center and support projects can be sent to: Highland Educational Project, Episcopal Diocese of WV, 1608 Virginia St. East/P.O. Box 5400, Charleston, WV 25361. A particular need is for bed frames for the center, at \$50 each. Another need is to support a booth for HEP at the General Convention; booth space rental costs \$1500 and promotional items another \$100-\$300.

Also there is an ongoing need for books as the "library" gives patrons books to keep! Books suitable for second to fourth graders are especially welcome; books for family members of all ages, from tots to adults, will also find a home. If you have books to donate, please let either Cookie Schultz or Grace Ayscue know and we will handle them or else connect you with Father Paul (who occasionally visits Pittsburgh and will happily stop by Morgantown to collect books on his way).



## Youth Outing to Escape Room

By Fr. Michael Delk

On March 24<sup>th</sup> we restarted our youth group with a trip to Morgantown Escape Room. We had a great time trying to solve puzzles and riddles to open up more and more clues so that we could find the key to our escape room in 60 minutes. We didn't quite make it, but we were so close that the owners of the place let us finish up anyway. It was an exciting adventure, the first of many, with more to come for our junior and senior high youth in grades 6 - 12.





Our annual Clean-up Day will be Saturday, April 13 from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm.

We will gather to do spring cleaning inside and outside the church.

Come help make our church glisten!



## Fellowship Luncheons

By Jerrey Hoyt

The Fellowship Committee will begin hosting monthly luncheons at area restaurants. The luncheons will provide an opportunity to enjoy fellowship and good food. We will be inviting our friends from Trinity to attend. Our first luncheon will be held at **Ali Baba Restaurant on Wednesday, April 24 at 11:30 am.**

Please RSVP to either Margot Racin or Jerrey Hoyt: [mbracin@comcast.net](mailto:mbracin@comcast.net) [jhoyt13025@gmail.com](mailto:jhoyt13025@gmail.com) / 304-288-8081

by Sunday, April 21. We look forward to seeing you at our first luncheon!



## Milestone Birthday: Carolyn Nelson

By Margot Racin

Parishioners celebrated Carolyn Nelson's 80th birthday at coffee hour St Patrick' Day. Carolyn and Byron Nelson are founding members of St. Thomas à Becket; they were there Dec 12, 1979, and have been contributing to our common life ever since in many ways.

Among other service, Carolyn has been on Vestry and a Priest Search Committee; she has painted walls and planted plants on work days and nurtured our children in Sunday School. Carolyn brought her sewing machine to Faye Sanders' workshop for weeks

when Crafty Ladies made gifts and decorations for Christmas in October. Most recently, the Nelsons greet guests and members Sunday mornings as ushers.



Thank you, Carolyn, for many years of service. We wish you many more Happy Birthdays.



## ECM Peterkin Scholarships Available

By Bob Acciavatti

The Episcopal Churchmen (ECM) at St. Thomas à Becket are pleased to announce that scholarships as partial reimbursement of registration fees will be offered again to parish children who wish to attend a camp at the WV Episcopal Diocesan Peterkin Conference Center, near Romney, WV, this summer.



Please go to the Peterkin website: <https://www.wvdiocese.org/peterkin/>

to find out about Peterkin Conference Center and how to register for one of the Peterkin summer camps.

The amount of each scholarship depends on how many requests received as the basis for dividing the available funds of \$500. Each scholarship will reimburse that portion of the total registration fee. Each request should provide evidence that the child has registered for a summer camp.

If your child wants to attend a camp at Peterkin this summer and you would like to receive a partial scholarship, please contact Bob Acciavatti by April 20 at [auriebob@comcast.net](mailto:auriebob@comcast.net). Partial Scholarships will be awarded after May 1, 2024.



# SRSH Easter Baskets

By Grace Ayscue

We provided Easter Baskets for a family of seven - including five girls - to Scotts Run Settlement House, along with a large tote of food and toys. Aurie Acciavatti, assisted by Grace Ayscue, assembled and delivered the baskets and tote.



## Easter at St. Thomas à Becket



Photos by Jeff Fedan and Aurie Acciavatti.







# February Vestry Meeting Highlights

By John McFerrin

Father Delk presented a report of his activities. Our attendance is still going up. We cracked 100 for the first time in a long time. We have three new members by transfer of membership. Fr. Michael discussed the possibility of pew cards or some alternative to visitors signing the guest book. The junior and senior high youth will start meeting again on Sunday, March 24.

The Finance Committee reported on our investments; we current have about \$494,000 in investments, including our Certificates of Deposit. We have

received 49 pledges for a total of \$213,000 for annual offerings. Although the Committee did not research the number of pledges in the entire history of the church, the most we have had in recent years is 54. There were also pledges to capital improvements of \$19,700.

Jeff Fedan presented the reported on the status of ongoing projects: Rector's office, door to Sunday School room, skylight, leak, hooks, floor mat, drainage hoses down the hill, new vent in the kitchen. Jeff would like to have solar panels installed on our roof. With solar panels we make all the electricity we need during the day and sell the rest to the power company. At night, the power company sells back to us the electricity we need. The rates at which electricity is bought and sold will change at the end of 2024 so that it would be more advantageous to get solar panels now rather than in 2025 or later.

Having blitzed through the updates, we moved on to the big kahuna of property discussions: bathrooms. We remain committed to a goal of making our bathrooms so that they meet the needs of people who are transgender or in transition. We are going to explore—subject to getting estimates, determining financing, etc.—reconfiguring our bathrooms by leaving the women's bathroom as it is and dividing the men's bathroom into two separate bathrooms: one for men and a family bathroom that can also be used by persons of any gender.

Natalie will be traveling in Idaho in April. Linda Yost will be covering for her although her absence might mean that some things will not be done while she is gone, including the Parish Post.

P.J. Henry noted that it would be helpful if we had a nursing station, a quiet place where new mothers could nurse. He is going to survey our new mothers and come up with a recommendation.



Stewardship Giving Report			
February*	Giving	Expenses	Variance
Monthly	\$29,077	\$29,487	(\$410)
2024 YTD	\$54,644	\$50,705	\$3,939

\*Amounts reflect balances as of February 29, 2024 from the Treasurer's report presented at the March 21, 2024 vestry meeting.



The Rev. Michael Delk, Rector  
The Rev. Al Prichard, Deacon  
Dr. William Haller, Director of Music

75 Old Cheat Road  
Morgantown, WV 26508

304.296.0270

parish@stthomasabecket.org  
rector@stthomasabecket.org  
www.stthomasabecket.org

### Sunday Worship Schedule

8:00 am **Holy Eucharist Rite I**  
in-person only

9:00 am **Adult Formation**

**Holy Eucharist Rite II**  
in-person and livestreamed on  
YouTube

10:30 am *Nursery Care*  
*Children's Sunday School*  
**Coffee Hour** after service



St. Thomas à Becket Episcopal Church  
75 Old Cheat Road  
Morgantown, WV 26508

# April 2024

S	M	T	W	R	F	S
	1	2	3 5:30 pm Faith Relations HFH Meeting	4 12:00 pm Parish Hall RSVD: Racin	5	6
7   2 Easter 8:00 am Holy Eucharist I 9:00 am Adult Formation Class: Mark 10:30 am Holy Eucharist II (in-person and on YouTube) Coffee Hour	8	9 9:30 am Mountaineer Cleaning	10 12:30 pm Backpack Feeding Program @ SRSH	11	12	13 Clean-up Day 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
14   3 Easter 8:00 am Holy Eucharist I 9:00 am Adult Formation Class: Mark 10:30 am Holy Eucharist II (in-person and on YouTube) Coffee Hour (host needed) Columbarium Committee Meeting after church	15 7:30 pm Outreach Committee Meeting on Zoom	16 Natalie out of office	17	18 7:00 pm Vestry Meeting	19	20 Parish Hall, Kitchen RSVD: Horacek
21   4 Easter 8:00 am Holy Eucharist I 9:00 am Adult Formation Class: Mark 10:30 am Holy Eucharist II (in-person and on YouTube) Coffee Hour	22 6:00 pm Property Committee Meeting	23 9:30 am Mountaineer Cleaning Natalie out of office	24 11:30 am Fellowship Luncheon @ Ali Baba	25	26	27
28   5 Easter 8:00 am Holy Eucharist I 9:00 am Adult Formation Class: Mark 10:30 am Holy Eucharist II (in-person and on YouTube) Coffee Hour	29	30				



### Birthdays

- 1 - Eric Beard
- 4 - Sarah Whitty
- 7 - Kora Steurer
- 10 - Beth Royall
- 11 - Susan Seitz
- 12 - Elizabeth Greza
- 13 - Anne Greza
- 14 - Bayley Brown
- 21 - Leo Horacek
- 25 - Jason Robbins
- 27 - Carter Smailes
- 30 - Kasey Yost

### Anniversaries

- 21 - John & Carol Beall
- 21 - Jeff & Kathy Fedan
- 23 - Bernie & Cookie Schultz
- 30 - Mark & Linda Yost

Don't see your birthday or anniversary listed? Let us know!  
parish@stthomasabecket.org

# Service Ministers' Schedule: April 2024

<p><b>April 7</b> 2 Easter</p>	<p>8:00 am Liturgical Assistant: Jeff Fedan 8:00 am Reader: Acolytes: A. Nicely, Theo Tolka, Bob Acciavatti Altar Guild: Kathy, Florita, Cheryl, Liz, Carol Coffee Hour: Hoyt, French Counters (Monday): Kathy Fedan, Nancy Mosser Eucharistic Minister: A. Nicely</p>	<p>Flowers: Easter flowers Intercessor: Margot Racin Producer: Nancy Mosser Readers: Byron Nelson, A. Nicely Ushers: Angela Carver, Maddie Carver Vestry Closer: Lisa Holland</p>
<p><b>April 14</b> 3 Easter</p>	<p>8:00 am Liturgical Assistant: Tara Steed 8:00 am Reader: Acolytes: Carol Beall, Bob Acciavatti Altar Guild: Alice, Hap, Mary Lou, Bernie, Cookie Coffee Hour: <b>TBD</b> Counters (Monday): Kathy Fedan, Linda Durfee Eucharistic Minister: Carol Roberts Spears</p>	<p>Flowers: <b>TBD</b> Intercessor: Jeff Fedan Producers: Lisa Holland and Sam Valaike Readers: Lynda Waggoner, Tom Waggoner Ushers: Carolyn Nelson, Byron Nelson Vestry Closer: Ginny Aultman-Moore</p>
<p><b>April 21</b> 4 Easter</p>	<p>8:00 am Liturgical Assistant: Carol Beall 8:00 am Reader: Susan Seitz Acolytes: John Beall, Bob Acciavatti, Wilma-Rue Tolka Altar Guild: Phil, Patti, Natalie, Alice, John, Lynda Coffee Hour: Swearingen, Beddow Counters (Monday): Kathy Fedan, Aurie Acciavatti Eucharistic Minister: Jeff Fedan</p>	<p>Flowers: Beall Intercessor: Kathy Fedan Producers: <b>TBD</b> Readers: Rob Turley, Nicki Turley Ushers: Roy Spears, Carol Roberts Spears Vestry Closer: Nancy Mosser</p>
<p><b>April 28</b> 5 Easter</p>	<p>8:00 am Liturgical Assistant: Bob Acciavatti 8:00 am Reader: Ron Richardson Acolytes: Tara Steed, Bob Acciavatti, Caroline Beddow Altar Guild: Grace, Anne, Patty, Susan Coffee Hour: Spears, Turley Counters (Monday): Linda Yost, Carol Roberts Spears Eucharistic Minister: A. Nicely</p>	<p>Flowers: <b>TBD</b> Intercessor: Dede Burnell Producers: Jeff Fedan, Kathy Fedan Readers: Carol Beall, John Beall Ushers: Jim Sharley, Kathy Fedan Vestry Closer: Bryan Tolka</p>